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ADDRESS

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DELIVERED BY

Dr. ENOCH CHASE,

July 4th, 1872.

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MILWAUKEE NEWS CO., BOOK AND JOB PRINTERS.
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A D D R E S S
TO
The Old Settlers' Club,
JULY, 4th, 1872.

GENTLEMEN :—I feel highly honored in being called upon to address you to-day. I congratulate you upon your hale and undegenerate appearance, which bespeaks your temperate lives, and the salubrity of our Wisconsin climate. When we consider what Wisconsin was thirty years ago, and what it now is, we may well be surprised at the wonders which a generation has wrought. Thirty years ago railroads were almost unknown, and it was eight years later before the first mile of track was laid in Wisconsin. To the labors of some of you we are indebted for the impulse which led to the construction of a thousand miles of railroad in the State. Others of you founded our commercial enterprises ; built these rows of stately business palaces that line our streets ; established our schools and churches ; reared up our vast manufacturing interests ; formed the early ranks of the learned professions here, which are a noble credit to the Northwest, and planted here on these lovely shores the various elements of our municipal greatness. Under the benignant and guiding influences which you created, you have seen Milwaukee become the first primary wheat market in the world, the fourth pork packing city in the Union, the second commercial city

on Lake Michigan, the seventeenth in population and, according to Dr. Johnson, the healthiest American city. Gentlemen, you may well be proud of these results of your labors. The worker is better than the speculator ; others sold corner lots while you founded a city. Long may you yet live to behold the greatness of which you have planted the fruitful germs. But the main object of this address is not congratulatory, but to preserve some fragments of the history of the first settlers in Milwaukee, to which we will proceed.

Pierre Marquette was the first white man who ever saw this spot. He left Green Bay, Oct. 26th, 1674, and traveled along the coast to Chicago, which he reached Dec. 4th, of that year. Father Nicollet traveled the same journey and back six years later. On the 14th of September, 1799, Father Cosme left Mackinaw with one attendant, and reached Milwaukee on the 7th of October, where they remained two days, on account of a storm on the lake, and laid in a store of wild ducks for provision. They reached the mouth of Root River, Oct. 10th, and ascended it for the purpose of reaching Fox River, which led into the Mississippi. Failing in that attempt, they proceeded to Chicago where they found Father Buinoteau. The next mention made of Milwaukee was by Lt. James Carroll, in 1761. The first trader located here was Alexander Laframbois, who established a trading house on this spot in 1785, which he maintained a few years, when he returned to Mackinaw and sent his brother here to supply his place. The latter was afterward killed by the Winnebago Indians on Rock River, and the post was abandoned.

Soon after the close of the Revolutionary War, Mr. Mirandean and John Vieau left Quebec for the Northwest. Mr. Mirandean was an educated French gentleman, belonging to one of the first families of Quebec. He was a Catholic and studied for the priesthood, but, on the eve of taking orders, came with Mr. Vieau to the Northwest as an employe of the American

Fur Company. They traded some years about the Lake Superior region and afterwards on the Wabash, and finally came to Milwaukee about the year 1795. Mr. Mirandean brought with him his wife, a Chippewa woman whom he had just married. He resided here till his death, in 1821, and raised a family of ten children, of whom Mrs. Victor Perthier, the wife of Joseph Perthier, was the sixth and was born in the year 1805. He was a blacksmith and received pay for his work in game and furs, selling the latter at Mackinaw. He was a tall, fine looking man, with crisp, curly hair. His house occupied the site of the old Milwaukee House, and was his home for twenty-five years. He raised wheat, corn, potatoes, beans, &c., on the land along Huron street and south of it. This land was then tillable, as the water in the lake was some four or five feet lower than it now is, and the marsh along the Kinnickinnic, east of Dr. Weeks garden, was planted in corn. He appears to have been a religious man, as he had prayers in his house every evening and was in the habit of reading religious books to his family. He had quite a large library, and spent all his leisure time in reading. He was a great favorite of his wild neighbors, who promised him all the land between the river and lake as far as the North Point when they made the treaty for the sale of their lands; but he died before that treaty was made, and Mr. Juneau succeeded him as the chief white man in Milwaukee. He was buried near the intersection of Broadway and Wisconsin streets. His widow survived till 1838 and was well known to many of the early settlers of Milwaukee. Full and half blood women made true and faithful wives to the traders, but would tolerate no infidelity by their liege lords. The mother of Mrs. ——— was driven from the house of her sister in Green Bay in mid-winter, as Hagar was driven from the tents of Abraham, and she was compelled to go on foot to Sheboygan, thus proving that human nature is the same in all ages and among all races.

I have known the history of Mr. Mirandean for thirty-six years, and have been surprised that his name is never mentioned as the founder of Milwaukee. John Vieau spent his summers in Milwaukee and his winters in Green Bay. Stanislaus, Chappreau, Lauscut, Filey, and several others are mentioned by my informant as occasional residents here, but Mr. Mirandean was the first white man who moved here, spent his married life here, died and was buried here. I think this entitles him to the honor of recognition as the first white settler of Milwaukee. All his children who survived him went to Kansas, except Mrs. Perthier. She, her three children and four grand children, the immediate descendants of Mirandean, still reside in this county.

John Baptiste Bawbeal, a son-in-law of Alexander Laframboise, had a trading post at about the foot of Chestnut street for some years between 1800 and 1812.

I have lived in the West forty-one years, more than the average lifetime of a generation. Forty years ago the territory of Michigan included Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota, and contained a population of 31,639. Now the territory contains a population of 3,645,000. Two newspapers were then printed in this vast territory; one hundred and eighty-two are now printed in Wisconsin alone. During the winter of 1831-2, a weekly mail on horseback supplied all the country west of Tecumseh, Michigan. New York City had then a population of 202,589, or about two-thirds of the population of Chicago (then a mere trading post) at the time of the great fire. Solomon Juneau and his employes were the sole inhabitants of Milwaukee in 1832, while now it is the home of 100,000 souls. There were then less miles of railroad in the United States than there are now in Milwaukee county. The main route of travel at that time between the East and West was by Lake Erie and the Erie Canal, and half a month was occupied in the journey from New England to Detroit. Now, by either of the four lines of railroad, the traveler can reach New York in thirty-four hours after

leaving Milwaukee. California, the Rocky Mountains and the great plains, were then known only to the Indian tribes and a few adventurous Spaniards from Mexico. They are now our near neighbors, and lie at our open doorways.

In 1831, Wisconsin had 2,043 white inhabitants, principally located in Brown and Crawford counties, which then, in fact, embraced nearly all the present territory of the State. The main route of travel across the country was by way of the Fox and Wisconsin rivers. There was a military post at Chicago, (Fort Dearborn,) at Green Bay, (Fort Howard,) at Prairie du Chien, (Fort Crawford,) and Fort Snelling was the farthest post to the northward. That was the first year of active emigration to the Great West. The Black Hawk War, in 1832, suspended emigration, which was vigorously renewed in 1833-4. In 1835, Michigan formed a State Constitution, and settlers began to enter Wisconsin in large numbers. In April 1835, there was not a single tavern north of Chicago, though one was being built at Gross Point. There was a shanty west of Waukegan; Vieau had an Indian trading post at Skunk Grove; Solomon Juneau, George H. Walker and Horace Chase each had Indian stores at Milwaukee, and White and Evans had also a shanty near the foot of Huron street. Waukegan, Kenosha and Racine were yet unknown. On my journey to Milwaukee I stopped at the shanty back of the present site of Waukegan, where I saw the only white man after leaving Gross Point till I reached Milwaukee. Arriving in Milwaukee, April 9th, 1835, I found Solomon Juneau, Albert Fowler, Horace Chase, White, Evans, Joel S. Wilcox, and some few others whose names I do not recollect, who soon afterwards left the country. The road led by the present site of the Layton House, near where Burnham's brick yard now is, and through the present Fifth and Eighth Wards to Walker's Point. A few claims had been made between that road and the lake. Indian trails were the only roads away from the place to the westward and northward.

The settlement of new countries is nature's plan for improving the human race. The more enterprising, vigorous and intelligent leave the thickly settled eastern world and the homes of old civilizations and come to live in the broad West. Here the blood of the different races is crossed, and a superior population is produced by the process. The Saxon, the Celt, the Teuton, the Scandinavian and Slavonian here mix together as inevitably as the Missouri and the Mississippi flow into a single channel and produce one mighty flood. Inter-marriage and the consequent intermixture of the races who occupy our soil is a continuous process. In 1870 there were born in Milwaukee county 2,715 children of foreign fathers and native mothers, or of native fathers and foreign mothers. At the same time, there were in the State 47,073 children whose fathers or mothers were of foreign birth, the other parent being a native. The healthy emigrant women, who do not fear either work or the breeding of children, will be mothers of the future rulers of the United States. They bear to the world healthy sons and daughters, healthy morally and intellectually, who will form an imperial, dominating race, fit for the highest achievements in civilization, in progress and empire.

The first framed house built in Milwaukee stood on or near the ground now occupied by Bradley & Metcalf's store, and was occupied as an office, in 1835, by Albert Fowler, who had been appointed Justice of the Peace by the Governor of Michigan territory. The first warehouse was built at the mouth of the river in May of the same year by Clybourn & Chase. No crops were raised in 1835, and the settlers obtained flour from Ohio, potatoes from Michigan, and pork and beef from Illinois.

In the month of June, 1835, a Methodist preacher, whose name I have forgotten, arrived here, and preached the first sermon in Milwaukee in my log house at the mouth of the river. He and Mr. Barber, a Congregationalist, preached occasionally

afterward in the same place. Mr. Clark, the presiding elder, visited the place and preached once during the winter of 1835-36.

The first white child born in the place was Milwaukee Smith, born in October, 1835, daughter of U. B. Smith, still a resident of this county. I was the only physician in the place, and attended to such few cases of illness as occurred until the arrival of Dr. Barber, in the Spring of 1836, when he assumed my practice such as it was. The most important case which I attended was that of Dr. B. B. Carey, of Racine, who had been shot through the lungs by a desperado whom he ejected from a claim made by him at that place.

B. Finch made and William Seaver laid the first brick in Milwaukee. U. B. Smith was the first tailor; Edward Wisner the first shoemaker; George Reed the first lawyer; Daniel Richards the first printer; Samuel Brown the first carpenter; and B. K. Edgerton was the first surveyor who settled in Milwaukee. William Strottman was the first German emigrant. Hon. A. G. Ellis published the first newspaper published in Wisconsin, the *Green Bay Intelligencer*, of which the first number was issued in December, 1833.

Milwaukee was the favorite summer resort of several tribes of Indians, among whom were the Pottawotamies, Winnebagoes, Chippewas, Menomonees and fragments of the Sacs and Foxes. They lived in bark houses which they built along the bluffs, and subsisted mainly on fish; sturgeon, trout and white fish being the principal varieties caught. According to my informant more than two hundred of these bark houses were built for the accommodation of these aboriginal lakeside loiterers, who numbered at least two thousand, and returned here year after till driven away by the white population. According to Catlin, the Indians before being contaminated by the white race were moral in their practices, and though yielding to superstitious beliefs were really a religious people. They had the same reverence for the Great Spirit as the white man has for

the Deity which he worships, and they probably led as pure lives as are led by the majority of Christians. They have almost passed away, and the feeble, vagabond remnants of the great tribes which remain about us appear to serve only as reminders that the savage races, when brought into contact with civilization, acquire its vices without its virtues, which become simply the means of their destruction.

In the common course of events, my dear and time honored friends, our human forms will be laid beneath the clods of the valleys and the tears of affection will moisten the verdure that grows above us. What we have done that was good and what we have done that was evil in our lives, will then stand in judgment against us, to our honor or to our dishonor, not only among men but before the Author and Judge of our being. Three of our number have died during the past year; more will probably pass away during the year before us, for, at the ages in life which the most of us have reached, our tenure here is a feeble and uncertain one. Men live happily, and their days are long in the land, in the proportion that they obey the laws of life, and their memory is blessed as is the measure of the good deeds, whether small or great, which they leave behind them. From what I know of you, and by the age that is yours, I judge that your years have not been misspent, but are fruitful of the good that crowns useful lives, that bears beneficent fruit in the community where you live, and that will make your names fragrant in the remembrance of mankind when you are gone. I shall hold you in kind remembrance, and you will be ever present in my benedictions, as I trust I may be in yours.

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